



Director's update

I am delighted to announce that PCOC will be convening a national symposium on 29th November 2022. The *PCOC Symposium 2022: Advancing the immediate future of palliative care outcomes* will bring together senior leaders from Australian PCOC-registered services to focus on our “near future” of palliative care outcomes in Australia. Our symposium builds upon our inaugural *PCOC Outcomes & Benchmarking Conference 2019* (which was the last time PCOC-registered services came together in person) and our annual national benchmarking workshops. Please mark your diaries for this national event.

PCOC's new outcomes collection (version 4.0) will be launched at the symposium. The symposium will coincide with the 10th anniversary of the release of PCOC's existing outcomes collection (version 3.0), which was launched in November 2012. Taking time to be clear about what we can realise through the new collection is important, and the symposium will provide us with an opportunity to do this together. Consultations will follow on from the symposium to deliver key priorities that emerge from our national meeting.

A great deal of work has and is still being undertaken to deliver the new outcomes collection. Thank you to the external reference group that helped refine the collection, the chair of this group – Professor Kathy Eagar, and the additional subject matter experts who agreed to be interviewed and consulted. Importantly, a range of palliative care services piloted the new collection with patients and their unpaid caregivers. This pilot has been critical to guaranteeing a relevant, feasible and useful collection. I thank these services for their valuable contribution.

In other news, Professor David Currow has accepted a new role with the University of Wollongong as the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Health and Sustainable Futures). As such, David has stepped down from his PCOC Chief Investigator role. As many of you know, David is one of the founding members of PCOC. His knowledge, expertise and passion for improving outcomes and his drive to ensure excellence has been instrumental to the ongoing development of the program. I look forward to ongoing collaborations with David as PCOC continues to build upon its strong foundations.



Dr Barbara Daveson
PCOC Director



PCOC Symposium 2022: Advancing the immediate future of palliative care outcomes (29th November 2022, Sydney Australia)
PCOC invites senior clinical leaders from Australian PCOC-registered services to discuss patient, family and carer outcomes and priorities to improve palliative care outcomes across Australia. Please mark your diaries for **29th November 2022**. Contact pcoc@uow.edu.au for more information



Data submission for the January-June 2022 PCOC patient outcomes reports is now closed and reports are being finalised. **Want to discuss your patient outcomes report or book in a consultation with PCOC about this?** please email pcoc@uow.edu.au



New PCOC patient outcomes collection

PCOC is finalising changes to the PCOC outcomes collection. The assessment tools in the program remain broadly the same. A small selection of key new items are to be introduced, and a small number of existing items will be modified.



These new and modified items will improve the clinical utility of PCOC and provide relevant information to support palliative care services in undertaking quality improvement activities and service development.

PCOC's Executive Director, Professor Kathy Eagar, has Chaired the Version 4.0 reference group. This group has been instrumental in proposing and reviewing changes to the collection.

As part of revising the collection, PCOC has been liaising closely with services and clinicians across the country to pilot items for the PCOC Version 4 outcomes collection.

The pilot has included palliative care services delivering care in inpatient and community settings (both direct care and consult models) across metropolitan and regional Australia. The feedback received has been invaluable in ensuring high utility, acceptability and feasibility of the modifications.

Maree Banfield has been the project lead for the pilot with the services.



Want more information? Please contact Maree (banfield@uow.edu.au) for more information on the New, Version 4 outcomes collection



Impact of Covid on service delivery

Over the past six months, PCOC has disseminated an administrative survey to participating services to better understand the impact of Covid-19 on palliative care service delivery. In reviewing these surveys, themes emerging regarding the impact on staff, patients, families and carers have emerged.

“People not wanting to stay in hospital has resulted to a change in the number and type of people coming to our service... Higher acuity and complexity of patients”

“Current staff turnover means there is a lack of experienced staff who know referral pathways and have good generalised palliative care knowledge”

“It has been very difficult [for families and patients] with visitor restrictions”

“the wards have been desperately short staffed with bed closures”

Despite the disruptions in the majority of PCOC-registered services, outcomes have been maintained in most services that received an outcomes report in 2021.



Specialist and supportive Palliative Care team at Gold Coast University Hospital



Quality and education update

The PCOC program has fully transitioned to virtual delivery with a range of options available to meet online training and education needs. The options cater to members of the multidisciplinary team, and are applicable across clinical settings and the various stages of implementing and using the PCOC model to drive quality improvements.


PCOC also offers on-site support for those preparing to implement PCOC. This on-site support is supplemented by self-directed resources and videos, which can be found on the PCOC YouTube channel and website. The education program is supported by communities of practice that enable knowledge translation through shared experience, special interests and the development of resources. Communities of practice are established from common interests arising through our workshops, and we encourage all clinical leads to come along to these to share their knowledge and experiences.

Sabina Clapham

PCOC Quality and Education Manager

Upcoming PCOC workshops and webinars

Fundamentals webinar

 Increase competency in the clinical application of the assessment and response framework

Audience: Clinicians new to using the PCOC tools

Duration: 1.5 hours

Register: [21 September](#) [1 November](#)



Assessment and Response workshop

Learn about strategies and resources to embed PCOC into routine practice

Audience: Clinical leads

Duration: two part full-day workshop

Register: [2 November](#)



Advanced workshop

Learn how to use PCOC reports for quality improvement and service development

Audience: Clinical leads

Duration: two part full-day workshop

Register: [9 November](#)

Meet the PCOC Improvement Facilitators

PCOC Improvement Facilitators (IFs) support services to implement, embed and sustain the PCOC program. IFs:

- Help services start using PCOC assessments
- Support and promote clinical leads and communities of practice
- Facilitate access to evidence on how to improve
- Provide education and training resources
- Support the development of QI plans
- Link similar organisations and services through the PCOC community of practice

Our team of PCOC IFs draw on a background of expertise to support services in improving palliative care outcomes (including speech pathology, nursing, oncology, dietetics, public health, health service management). The IFs love to support services to improve outcomes. Please get in touch.

For more information on our PCOC team please visit: [The PCOC Team](#)



Service highlights

Thinking about doing a quality improvement (QI) project? PCOC IFs can support you in your quality plans and documentation. QI initiatives led by services include:

ROOM #	ALERT	
NAME	AGE	
URN	DOB	
ADMISSION DATE		
DIAGNOSIS		
DOCTOR		
GOALS OF CARE		
PHASE	REG-ASS	KARNDIVISY
SOCIAL		
SYMPTOMS AND TREATMENT		
MOBILITY		
BEHAVIOUR		
BLANDER		

QI to improve the recognition and response to unstable phases through daily team meetings - Albany Community Hospice

This project aimed to identify reasons for longer unstable phases and develop strategies to improve the recognition of unstable phase, in conjunction with symptom scores and changes in the care plan, and the response to this phase. A clinical handover policy and clinical handover sheet were developed as part of this project.



QI to standardise processes for timely, patient-centred care - Sacred Heart Community Palliative Care, Sydney

This project aimed to incorporate PCOC assessment tools into visit scheduling and discharge planning processes to standardise these routine processes and enable timely, patient-centred care in response to identified needs. A visit schedule using PCOC phases, workload planner and discharge process were developed as part of this project.

QI reports led by PCOC-registered services are available on the PCOC website. Visit <https://www.uow.edu.au/ahsri/pcoc/palliative-care/accreditation-standards-quality/>

Accreditation, national standards and quality



PCOC supports organisations in meeting safety and quality standards and helps services achieve and maintain accreditation. Resources available include: [National Safety and Quality Health Service Standards](#) and the [National Palliative Care Standards](#). A National Safety and Quality Primary and Community Standards will be released soon by PCOC.

Research publications in 2022 that rely on PCOC data include:

Saurman E et al., (2022) [Preferred place of death—A study of two specialist community palliative care services in Australia](#). Journal of Palliative Care, 37 (1): 26-33.

Sousa MS et al., (2022) [Appetite-related distress is burdensome in the last sixty days of life of people receiving palliative care: A national longitudinal consecutive cohort study](#). Journal of Palliative Medicine, <http://doi.org/10.1089/jpm.2021.0462>.



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